MOTIVES FOR THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM;

AN ADDRESS

PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE

Philosophian and Excelsior Societies

OF

WITTENBERG COLLEGE, SPRINGFIELD, OHIO,

ON THE EVENING OF THE 19TH OF MARCH, A. D. 1850.

BY THE

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I shall straight conduct you to a hill-side, where I will point you out the path of a virtuous and noble education; laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect, and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming.
MILTON'S PROSE WORKS, vol. I, p. 160.

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ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETIES:

From the scenes of an arduous ministry, I have come down to mingle with you in the literary festivities of this occasion. I have come to present my testimony, however humble it may be, in favor of the purposes of your associations. And if you will accept the fruits of a few hours here and there stolen from the duties of my office, I contribute them with all the cheerfulness and kind feeling of which I am capable.

You are engaged, gentlemen, in the pursuit of knowledge and mental culture. This is the avowed object of your societies, and the grand aim of all your present exertions. And what I most covet this moment, is to be able to inflame your zeal in the prosecution of this enterprise. True, the praises of learning are often heard. You have listened to them in the lecture-room, and by the fire-side. You have caught them up as they fell from the lips of the orator, or trembled on the strings of the poet's harp. But it is a theme which never palls upon the student's taste. Having heard it once, he turns to it again as he would to the repetition of a strain of delicious music. To him it is never out of place. He is apt to look upon the path to learning as a "painful steep," and to magnify its disadvantages. He sometimes thinks it beyond his strength "to climb the hard ascent of high Parnassus." He needs the help of encouragement. And as Philip thought it well to have a boy ever whispering in his ear that he was mortal; so the student finds it to his advantage to have the reward of his toils brought frequently o his view. The man who renders him such a service is a friend indeed. His words distill upon the study-worn heart, like dew upon the wilted grass, and are received as gratefully as a pleasant gale by a ship that has long been tugging its way upon a stagnant sea.

Looking, then, for the unction of Him who is the fountain of all wisdom, and the author of all science, I will endeavor to discharge the duty which your kindness has entrusted to me, by discussing some of the leading motives for the pursuit of literary and scientific information.

Among these motives, *the pleasures which such pursuits afford* are not unworthy of consideration.

Solomon once said, "In much wisdom there is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." But I doubt both the inspiration and the truth of that sentiment. It may properly be considered as one of those *vain and wicked thoughts*, which so troubled that great man during his alienation from the God of Israel. There is a luxury in study as sweet as the taste of food to the hungry. Man has an innate thirst for knowledge—an ever restless curiosity to be informed respecting everything that strikes his attention. And as it is painful to him to

be without the coveted intelligenee, so the gratification of his wishes fur nishes a corresponding pleasure. No matter if imperfection does adher to all human learning; it still affords aliment for thought, and a libert and satisfaction most desirable to the soul.

History is filled with examples showing sources of pleasure to the ma of learning of which the unlettered never taste. When Pythagora discovered the great geometrical truth, that the square described on th hypothenuse, or side opposite to the right angle of a right-angled tri angle, is exactly equal in area to the two squares described on the oth er two sides, he was roused into a transport which was not fully ex pressed save by the oblation of a thousand oxen. When Newton wa completing the sublime calculations which demonstrated to him the ex istence of universal gravitation, he was affected with such profound emo tion, that he had to resign the operation to be eoncluded by anothe: When Archimedes hit on the method of ascertaining the specific gravit of different substances, he leaped from the bath in which he chanced t be, ran out naked into the streets, and cried in his ecstacy, "*I have foun it, I have found it!*" Boethius, the last star that shone in the firmamen of ancient Rome, counterbalanced the dread of Theodoric's executione and the gloom of the Pavian tower, with what he styled "consolationi bus Philosophiae." Sir Walter Raleigh found relief from the tedium an sadness of his long imprisonment, by musing and writing on the histo ry of a world from which he suffered so unjustly. Erasmus, when cla in rags, preferred Greek books to comfortable garments, and loved th enjoyments of study more than all the luxuries of fortune. When th learned Winekleman was a youth, he sang through the streets at nigh to obtain sustenance for himself and his infirm father, rather than for go his attention to his instructors by day. And we are told that Crate Thales, Democritus, and Anexagoras, spontaneously relinquished thei inheritances, that the cares of managing their property might not inte rupt their philosophic pursuits.

Of the delights of study, no small share arises from the facility whic the student acquires to draw information from everything around hin It is said of Lord Mansfield, that he never picked up even a child's prim er, without extracting something that he could turn to account. Th same is measurably true of every intelligent man.

> All things are inspiration unto him;
> Wood, world, hill, field. sea, city, solitude,
> And crowds and streets, and man, where e'er he is;
> And the blue eye of God which is above us:—
> *All things* to him bear thoughts of minstrelsy.

He never wants for amusement. The commonest and most worthles objects furnish him with something worthy of remark or investigatio The swinging of a lamp in the cathedral of Pisa led Galileo to the dis covery of the clock; and the fall of an apple introduced Newton to th sublimest of all nature's laws. The learned "find tongues in trees, book in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything. Eac clod or pebble has a history which they can trace with pleasure, and th smallest insect has a character which they can observe and study wit delight.

There are also triumphs attending the course of the diligent studen which minister greatly to his joy. Often difficulties arise to obstruct hi

gress. Necessity compels him to grapple with them. The odds seem be against him; but he cannot escape the conflict. Long the struggle en continues, while doubt holds the veil over the final issue. At gth the battlement is scaled—the difficulties are surmounted—and his l exults in the bloodless victory. These are triumphs, too, which are lloyed by sorrow or remorse. They are accompanied with no tears slain, and made bitter by no recollections of injustice. And few are emotions of man on earth that are more joyful than those produced such conquests.

And when we come to trace the course of the student in his explorans in the boundless field of truth, we feel at every step, that "*wisdom's ys are pleasantness.*" To see him poring over his grammars and lexns, his oriental scrawls and ragged parchments, one would suppose re was anything save pleasure in such employments. But, he is thus cing the structure of the grand chariot of thought, and examining the gular instrument of communication between mind and mind. He is lding converse with the mighty dead. He is listening to the high specations of the ancient sages. He is walking the groves of Academus, d dwelling in silence on those undying strains that were sung to the ellers on classic soil. The eloquence which swayed the Areopagus, d ruled the listening senates. is pouring on his ear. The pageantry Kings whose sceptres shook the earth, and the fierce national conflicts ich changed the channels of history, are passing before his eye. He decyphering the inscription on the tombstone of the departed world; d like an orphan lingering at its parents' grave, he frowns upon the insion that would break the spell of his heart.

To see him drilling and boring into the solid earth, and looking over l bones and rocky fragments, we might think him silly indeed. But, is musing on the wonderful antiquities of nature. He has thrown mself back into the abyss of time to contemplate creation's dawn—the de contentions which marked the earth's primeval days—and that proessive development which finally prepared it for the abode of man. e is listening to that subterranean thunder which was once the only und that broke the intense stillness of the young world. He is lookg at the terrible irruptions from the earth's fused bowels by which the amework of the continents was laid. He is delineating the huge *sauus* and *megatheria*, which once played their giant proportions over land id sea. He has entered the vast cemetery of extinct races where the ones of early generations lie embalmed, to learn where they lived, and ow they died. And as we accompany him in his walks through the upendous mausoleum, our hearts are filled with inspiring dread and easurable awe.

The uninitiated are astonished to see him sitting out in the damps of ight, gazing until morning dews have wetted his locks, at those shining ecks with which the Divine finger has dotted the face of heaven. But, e beholds something in these nightly scenes which they do not. He es there eight or nine worlds, part of which are twelve times as large s the one occupied by man, all with mathematical accuracy revolving ound a ball of fire near nine hundred millions of miles in diameter. He es there thousands of stars equal to the sun in magnitude, and doubtss having as many attendants. He looks through his telescope, and ousands upon thousands more of similar greatness and grandeur crowd

upon his view. And the longer he looks, the wider does the immensi of the unvierse open before him, until he is overpowered by the ama zing multiplicity of suns and systems "that wheel unshaken through th void immense." Nor are these celestial lights to him mere inanima and speechless masses. Each planet and star has a tongue discoursin wisdom and music to his heart—wisdom which needs no rhetoric or el cution to make it felt, and music far sweeter than ever rolled from th lyre of Orpheus.

> In reason's ear they all rejoice,
> And utter forth a glorious voice,
> Forever singing as they shine—
> "The hand that made us is Divine."

And other fields equally great and glorious lie open to the rapturou contemplations of the student. Natural history, with its beautiful an wondrous varieties, invites his delighted footsteps. Mathematics con duct him along paths so straight, to results so powerful and certain, tha forgetting all thought of extravagance, he joins in the exultation of th ancient Syracusan—"give me a place on which to rest my levers, and will raise the world." Political economy, moral philosophy, Heaven born christianity, all present themselves to minister to his gratification.

And these pleasures are higher, purer, and more enduring, than all th delights of sensuality. They are greater in variety, more extensively ac cessible, more exalting in their tendencies, and cannot be wrested fron their possessor by all the ingenuity and malice of his enemies. To thes intellectual joys, gentlemen, I point you, and by them I urge you to per severe with diligence in your present endeavors.

The increased respectability and usefulness which the pursuit of wisdon secures to a man, are also worthy of consideration.

The position of that man who spends his years gathering the spoils o mental conquest, and concentrating his energies upon the investigation o truth, is far different from him who wastes his time in indolence, or frit ters away his powers in frivolous pursuits. Intelligence always tends to elevate. Refinement is its legitimate fruit. As the polypus assumes the color of the rock to which it hangs, so the human character is brighten ed or blackened in proportion as it is set upon wisdom or foolishness.

It is said of Euripides, that, though naturally destitute of sublimity, he dwelt so much on the thoughts of Homer that he caught some of the in spiration, and thus became sublime. And it is affirmed that the pure English style of a famous American statesman, is the result of his having confined his reading to the purest English authors. The faithful stu dent must share the elevation of those who are made his guides in the pursuit of truth. His studies associate him with the greatest, the wisest, and the best of men. He is brought into familiarity with models of ex cellence of every description. He is presented with repeated vie ws of beauty and wonder in nature, and in all that adorns life. And he is un consciously inspired with a correctness of sentiment, a delicacy of per ception, and a taste for the admirable and true, which together constitute the foundation of all right elevation of character.

And the mutual dependence and sympathy between the several facul ties of man are such, that no one part of our spiritual nature can be im proved without summoning the whole of that nature to share in the ad vancement. By teaching a man virtue and religion, you necessarily im-

ove him intellectually. And so, by teaching him intelligence, and giv-
g discipline to his mental operations, you also inspire him with worthy
ntiments, and give a tone to his manners and conversation which is nev-
found among the illiterate. By the improvement of his literary taste,
ere is important contribution made to raise and dignify his general char-
ter. Many learned men have, indeed, been wicked and contemptible;
it who can say, that they would not have been much more vicious and
obligate had they never drank from the stream of knowledge? And
en amid the deepest moral degradation of an intelligent man, we may
serve some redeeming traits shining through what is despicable, like
rved fragments among ancient ruins, telling us that the hand of refine-
ent was once at work upon him.

Nothing has been more clearly ascertained, than that passionate de-
tion to the pursuit of knowledge and mental culture, has raised many
en from the most humble and obscure stations to the most honorable
nown to human society. Epictetus was born a slave, and lived in mis-
able poverty; but by patient application he became the pride of the
oics, and the familiar friend of one of Rome's best emperors. Captain
ook was once a common sailor on a coal vessel, but by scientific labors
raised himself to the honors of royal Academies, the confidence of a
ation, and the admiration and gratitude of the race. Mestestatio, from
friendless boy singing verses in the streets, arose to be a favorite of the
uses, and one of the most admired ornaments of Italian literature.
alentine Jameray Duval was at ten years old the orphan of a poor peas-
nt, and often begged in vain for a crust of bread, or a night's shelter
om the inclement winter. By industry in study, he became one of the
olest antiquarians of the last century, served as preceptor to the Empe-
or Joseph II, and died the keeper of the Imperial medals at Vienna.
ames Ferguson, and Dr. Alexander Murray, two of the most distin-
uished instructors of mankind, were once poor shepherd boys in Scot-
nd. William Gifford, the distinguished editor of the *Quarterly Review*,
as once a menial in a coasting vessel, and "a ship boy on the high and
iddy mast." Adrian was the son of a barge builder at Utrecht, and a
narity scholar at the university of Louvaine; too poor to buy candles,
e spent his evenings reading in the church porches, or by the light of
ne street lamps. But, by unwearied diligence, he became famous for
is acquirements, rose to be the preceptor to Charles V, and finally suc-
eeded to the papal chair. Dr. Isaac Milner, Dean of Carlisle, and Lu-
asian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge; and his brother Joseph,
uthor of the well known "History of the Church," promoted themselves
om the weaver's bench to the highest literary eminence. The celebra-
ed John Hunter, one of the greatest anatomists that ever lived, receiv-
d scarcely any education until he was twenty years of age, and then
ad to encounter the most formidable difficulties. The famous Ben Jon-
on was once a bricklayer, and labored as a common mason on the walls
f Lincoln's Inn. Dr. John Prideaux rose from a kitchen servant at Ex-
ter college to the see of Worcester. Prof. Heyne of Gottingen says,
hat want was the earliest companion of his childhood. Thirty and more
ears he spent in obscurity, struggling with the most depressing poverty.
But study and perseverance made him one of the greatest of classical
cholars, and secured to him a degree of reputation in Europe unrival-
d by any cotemporary in the same department of literature. Publius

Terence, from the condition of a slave, arose to have his society cove by the haughty consuls of Rome, and to be the admiration of the gr est of his time.

I refer to these instances, not to exemplify curious freaks of fortu by which men humbly born have been lifted to the upper places of s ety. I have no more confidence in what moderns call "*luck*," tha what the ancients called "*fate*." Providence may indeed have been vorable to these illustrious characters. But it is the Providence wh operates uniformly in favor of the humble, the diligent, and the persev ing. It was not *good luck*, but earnestness and application—not *fate*, resolution and zeal—which shaped their honorable fortunes. Their l tories are not singular *curiosities*, but displays of what study and culti tion of mind can do for the elevation of men even of the lowest orig and amid the most unpropitious circumstances.

According to the Baconian aphorism, "*knowledge is power*." It not ly improves a man's character, and extends his reputation; but gives l an influence more controlling than riches or crowns. It opens to hin sphere of usefulness which neither kings nor millionaires can enter. L ther, Calvin, and Zuingle, with no power but mind, and no support l truth, did more for the freedom and happiness of man than all the H ries and Charleses that ever commanded national armies, or royal tre ures. Though some will say that the education of the few can be of advantage to the many; it is because they are ignorant of the tru They overlook the wonderful discoveries of science which now minis so abundantly to the welfare of man. They are unnaturally blinded the striking evidences which crowd upon us of the direct influences learning upon our daily conveniences and necessities. If their eyes; ea and hearts were but open, they would learn a lesson from every ves that plays on the water, or railroad that streaks the plain—they wou hear a voice coming from every shop and factory, and breaking up them from every battle-field, and farm, and church, and parlor, a kitchen, in christendom—pointing to intelligence as the great instrume which God has given for the comfort and improvement of our race.

The changes for the better which the march of intelligence has wrou in the world, are marked and wonderful. There was once a time, n many centuries from the present, when men considered the visible u verse as one unbroken round of perplexing prodigies, and thought the invisible only as the abode of beings of dread and terror. But s ence has since taught them to regard these frightful mysteries as the n cessary and benevolent labors of nature, and caused their ghosts, witch and alarming genii to depart from the light of their better reason, li the devils from the footsteps of our Lord. Man now knows how a why the thunder rolls and the lightning plays along the sky, and by wh means to secure himself from any danger that may accompany the He can now foretell, understand, and delight in an eclipse. He no lo ger fears the waves of the sea, but commits himself to them, and rid as playfully on the ocean's broad bosom as on a beast of burden. H has so far mastered the fiercest elements, that he transmits intelligen with a speed that outruns the march of day; carries his thousand to with an ease and rapidity resembling the flitting of a bird; and rides lik Deity on the wings of the wind. He now understands disease, and ho to control it. Useful and precious ores, which he once unconsciousl

od under foot, he is now able to detect and bring forth in forms to min-
ter to the wants and conveniences of the race. Indeed, there is hard-
a comfort or facility enjoyed by modern society which does not now
cupy the place of something rude and miserable. We are apt to over-
ok these things. We have been born and bred among the fruits of
ıst scientific discoveries. We have always enjoyed them. We do not
alize what it is to be without them. And we too often forget whence they
iginated. We live in our commodious houses without thinking how
en come to build such, and admire the ingenious and beautiful furniture
e put into them, never once reflecting upon the extensive science
quired for its fabrication. We luxuriate in our elegant apparel without
eking to know what has introduced the vast improvement upon the
-leaves and skins with which our fathers covered their nakedness.
very day we enjoy the advantage of modern culinary apparatus, but
ldom consider that the pump, the stove, the tub, and all the general
nveniences of the kitchen, are the products of thought and science.
'e pleasure on our good roads—our steamboats—our railcars—and
ever think of our indebtedness to the genius and scientific labors of
cAdam, Wilson, Robertson, Ramsey, Fulton, Perkins, Bolton and
Vatt. We delight ourselves over our books and newspapers, but the
isdom required to construct the complicated machinery by which they
e given out in such abundance, hardly enters our recollection. We
e daily under the protection of a great and admirable political consti-
ıtion; we boast of our liberty and good laws, scarcely thinking of the
rofound philosophic reflection which gave them birth. Indeed, it is
ıpossible for us now to fathom the extent of those beneficial influences
hich science is exerting on human society. They reach every class
ıd age, and minister to the comforts of every condition of civilized
ıan. To blot them out of being, would destroy half the enjoyment of
fe, and prostrate the world into a state of barbarism which can hardly
e imagined or described.

Some may refer all these remarkable improvements to the workings
f chance. They may be considered as mere accidents in the history
f man. But how narrow is the philosophy which would inculcate such
octrines! Trifling circumstances may, in some cases, have excited the
ains of reflection by which wondrous truths have been brought out;
ut, how is it, that all these *accidents* have happened to men of enlarged
ttainments and habits of close investigation? Many an apple had fallen
om the stem on which it grew, and many an one thus falling had struck
ıe head of man without beating into his understanding the causes of
lanetary motion. It was only when it fell on Newton that the great
esson was first learned. Many a time had men beheld the overflowing
f the bath; but it was not until Archimides saw how his weight was
ressing the water over its sides, that the mode of determining specific
ravity was discovered. Often had men seen the oscillations of sus-
ended, bodies but it was only Galileo that could learn from them how to
ıeasure time. And so all the mighty results which date from such
asual incidents have been produced by the power of intellectual culture
nd scientific wisdom. The blind man cannot see the sun, though
hining in the fullness of his glory; the deaf man stands unmoved amid
he most enchanting melody; and for the simple reason that important
enses are lacking. And so, without science and learning, man must

have remained in the ignorance and misery of the rudest ages, unab to apprehend the plainest of those truths which form the substratum all our present happiness and elevation.

Let him, then, that would secure to himself the reputation of a ma polished in manners and useful in life—let him that has the nob ambition to become an ornament and benefactor of the race—let hi that would have his name repeated with affection and respect when he gone—let him that would sink upon his last pillow with the consciousne of having done good service to society, and have his influence to g down laden with blessings to unborn generations—let all men—giv ear to those heavenly words: "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefo get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding. Exalt hc and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honor, when thc shalt embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grac a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee."*

The light which learning and science afford us respecting the Deity a his revelation, and their tendencies to promote true religion, also deserve be considered.

That is a mistaken notion which represents intelligence as unfavorab to piety. Ignorance is not the mother of devotion. Enlightenment a religion are mutually dependent, and have always been associated. Tl great father of those inductive principles on which Brake, Keple Newton, and Laplace have acted, once said, "A little philosophy incline a man to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds abo to religion." And Sir Thomas Browne gave the caution more than tw hundred years ago, that "the precept, *Beware of philosophy*, is not to l received in too large a sense; for in this mass of nature there is a set things which carry in their front something of Divinity, which to wis reasons serve as luminaries in the abyss of knowledge, and to judicio beliefs, as scales and roundles to mount the highest pinnacles and highc pieces of Divinity."† It is not philosophy, but "philosophy falsely called," or philosophy but half fledged,‡ that is at war with religio The truly intelligent mind

> ——————————discerns
> A ray of heavenly light gilding all forms
> Terrestial, in the vast and the minute
> The ambiguous footsteps of the God
> Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
> And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.

So great is the help which modern science has rendered to religio that the strongest christian evidences, and the grandest ideas which no stir and warm our devotional feelings, would be utterly lost without How could we form a proper apprehension of the vastness—the majes —the power—wisdom—and the amazing providence of the Deity, wit

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*Proverbs of Solomon, iv: 7, 8, 9.

†Religio Medici, p. 38.

‡The amiable and philosophic Fronto says: "Omnium artium, ut ego ar tror, imperitum et indoctum esse praestat quam semiperitum et semidoctu Philosophiae quoque disciplinas aiunt satius esse nunquam attigise quam levit et primoribus ut dicitur labiis delibasse; eosque provenire malitiosissimos, q in vestibulo artis obversati, prius inde averterint quam intraverint."—*Ad Caes. lib.* iv: *ep.* 3.

t the revelations of the telescope on the one hand, and of the microscope the other! How could we so well conceive of the tremendous resources the Divine mind, without the lessons which mathematics and chemry have taught us of the laws and elements of the material universe! st as Aaron and Hur held up the sinking hands of Moses, as he spread em in devotion to the Patron of Israel, so science and learning give rength, ease, and liberty to our approaches to the Almighty. The lly intelligent man, like Abraham, worships high up on the mount; d borne aloft on wings of truth sublime, he exclaims with emotion known to the vulgar, "*Oh the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom d the knowledge of God!*"

The first breaking forth of the light of modern science, like the first splay of a candle in a dark room, did for a while dazzle and blind e long benighted faculties of man. The first fruits were regarded as cidedly prejudicial to the claims of revealed religion. It was thought, d confidently asserted, that the march of intelligence must overthrow e christian's notions of the Deity, and confute the statements of his ered writings. The astronomer supposed that he saw the grave of ristianity among the stars; and the antiquarian that it must be buried d lost under the exhumed relics of the past. Geologists

> ——————drilled and bored
> The solid earth; and from the strata there
> Sought to extract a register, by which to show
> That he who made it, and revealed its date
> To Moses, was mistaken in its age.

or a while, every new discovery brought dismay to the believer, and y to the infidel. Many denounced scientific studies as dangerous and retical, and the heavy hand of ecclesiastical malediction crushed many student for his success in the pursuit of truth. But the Divine wisdom is so tied the evidences of His revelation to the restless wheel of man's ideavors, and so mingled them with the motives of his impelling desires, at such skeptical tendencies could not long continue. As the different iences began to mature, they not only dislodged the difficulties they ere supposed to create, but put into their places solid arguments in vor of christianity. When once the pupil of man's intellectual eye thered sufficient strength to endure the light which thus beamed upon —when learned men came to examine the real nature and bearing of e truths disclosed—revelation found in them a resistless advocate and rofound interpreter. And even in the hands of infidels themselves, arning and science have by this time consolidated an impregnable wall round the christian faith.

It would lead me beyond the proprieties of the present occasion, to count the objections which science has suggested against revelation, nd describe all the steps by which they were removed; but a brief view is demanded for a proper illustration of the subject in hand.

It was once argued by the learned, that the amazing extent of the niverse, as disclosed by the telescope, furnished an insuperable bar gainst the gospel revelation. With their minds afloat among suns and ystems of immense magnificence and grandeur, they concluded that a all of earth so insignificant as that which we inhabit, could not have een the theatre of such stupendous plans as are spoken of in the Bible. But when the lamented Chalmers entered upon a resolution of this

difficulty, how soon it vanished! Having shown, that an infinite displa of compassion required a condescension to the most insignificant ar worthless object—that more is accomplished by these plans than tl redemption of man—and that the world as the abode of immortals ar the nursery of young angels is, after all, not so absolutely undeservi —he has laid all these astronomical objections so low, that no prude skeptic will ever refer to them again where the "*Astronomical Discourse* are known.

At another time when the multiplicity of languages and dialects use among mankind were the subjects of examination, it was insiste that here was ground for rejecting the inspiration of the book whi teaches, that once "the whole earth was of one language, and of o speech," and which assigns no better reason for the present diversity tongues; than the dispersion on the plains of Shinar. It was pronounce impossible that all these languages could have had a common origin But, without regard to the Divinity of the Scriptures, this field inquiry was entered. Presently it was discovered that languages forme themselves into groups, and that these groups tended to claim mutu relationship. The probability of a common root for all of them gre stronger and stronger. Sir Wm. Jones, a man of surpassing erudition, ar withal skeptically inclined, supposed at last that he could trace all th languages on earth back to *three*. And Herder, who held the history Babel as "a poetical fragment of the oriental style," has announced the result of his investigations, that "there is great probability, that th human race, and language therewith, go back to one common stock—t a first man." It has furthermore been shown, that there is a boldne and roughness of outline at the points where the different language separated from the original, which proves that it was not a gradu devolution—no silent action which divided them, but some viole convulsion answering to the Mosaic account.

At another period great alarm was felt in the religious world at th boasted antiquities of the Indies. Astronomical tables were found declared to have been formed more than three thousand years befo our era, and claimed to be fragments of a still earlier science. Th chronology of the Scriptures stood flatly contradicted by the new disco eries. But skeptics themselves soon found imperfections in the ground of their terrifying assertions. And we now have the high authority Laplace—a man with no special respect for revelation—that "the origi of astronomy in Persia and India, is lost, as among all other nations, i the darkness of their ancient history"—that "the Indian tables suppos a very advanced state of astronomy; but," that "*there is every reason t believe that they can claim no very high antiquity.*"

Simultaneously with this, there arose another difficulty from the histo rical records of China. Lists of long successive Kings were displayed and accounts of dynasties which ran back into unmeasured time. Th Mosaic narrative thus received another blow which many hoped, and a many feared, would prove fatal. But soon the viper was shaken fro the inspired historian's arm. It has now been re-established to universa satisfaction, by the laborious investigations of Sir William Jones, tha two thousand years before the christian era is the remotest period of an established government in the East—a period when a dynasty alread

sted in Egypt, and Abraham and Lot were watering their flocks on
hills and in the vales of Canaan.

Again the sacred history was attacked by the orientalist. The
terials for the new argument were imported from Egypt. Volney
ted the formation of the Egyptian colleges thirteen thousand years
fore Christ, and called that the second period of their history! For
antiquity of Egyptian civilization, infidelity pointed to the collossal
ages—the subterranean temples—the hieroglyphical legends—and
astronomical remains of that wonderful country. But when Cham-
llion decyphered the inscription on the Rosetta stone, the difficulty
parted as darkness from the approach of day. When that language
ose meaning was supposed to be lost with the race which once used
was recovered from its long obscurity, the names of Nero and Tiberius
re found in the most alarming of the newly discovered records, and the
jections from the zodiacs, pyramids, tombs, and inscriptions of Egypt
t their power forever. Science and learning, indeed, originated these
ficulties; but science and learning again resolved them. They sprung
among the inquiries of scientific investigation; infidelity circulated
em to the prejudice of revelation; but the same instrumentalities
hich produced them, and operating under the same motives, arrested
eir progress, and has now welded them into the mighty and everlasting
ain of the christian evidences.

Geology seems to be the only science upon which infidelity now leans
th confidence. But even here the current is rapidly changing in favor
the Bible. "From the time of Buffon," says Dr. Wiseman, "system
se beside system, like the moving pillars of the desert, advancing in
reatening array; but like them, they were fabrics of sand. And,
ough in 1806 the French Institute counted more than eighty such
eories hostile to Scripture history, not one of them has stood till now,
deserves to be recorded." There are certain positions, however,
hich the geologist has pretty well made out. He can demonstrate, that
e crust of the earth has a natural history which covers unmeasured
es; that it is composed of successive strata which lie in regular order
om the newest deposit, down to the lowest depths of human observa-
n; that there are evidences in these different strata that each one
presents a vast period in the world's duration; and that consequently,
e earth must have passed through cycles of ages before reaching the
rm and appearance which it now wears. He can prove, that vegetable
e and sentient beings existed in the world long before man became its
rd, or ever he walked upon its green and sunny surface. And many
ve thought that he has here furnished arguments for the total refuta-
n of the Mosaic cosmogony. But when properly considered, these
artling conclusions serve to conduct us to a better understanding of
e sacred historian's words, and furnish a grand demonstration of their
uth. They show us, that when Moses said, "In the beginning God
reated the heaven and the earth," he intended to teach that Jehovah's
rst creative act was to originate the matter and system of universal
ature; and that when he said, "And the earth was without form and
oid; and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of
od moved upon the face of the waters," he meant to give the history
f our world for those uncounted ages which elapsed between the first
reative movement and the period when God came to introduce the

present arrangement. And it is a remarkable fact, that amid all th fossils which the geologist has exhumed, and all the records which h has produced, there is no proof that *man* has lived any longer on ear than is represented in the Scriptures. Amid all on which he relies demonstrate animal and vegetable existence prior to the creation whi Moses recounts, he has not presented one *human* bone, or one sing indication of the existence of man. Other fossil remains and other bones h has disinterred in abundance; but none belonging to the huma species. He has found no coins, no medals, no historic records, no citie no monuments, nor even the commonest implements of the most savag tribes. Going down from the surface which now lies open to the tra of man, the first step removes from every trace of human existenc The remains of familiar animals gradually diminish with the descen The giant outlines of Saurian reptiles finally become the only objects contemplation. And at length we find ourselves in a region older tha death or life, and tread the very verge of stratification, without hearin a single voice, or witnessing a single token, to dispute the holy reco of the recent origin of our race. Geology, too, is thus following su with all the other sciences in rendering homage to inspired histor Once classed, and perhaps not unjustly, among the most pernicious faith, she is coming to be the humble handmaid of religion. Aft years of wandering from theory to theory, and from vision to visio she is returning to the home in which she was born, and to the alt where her first feeble offerings were made,* not a wilful, dream empty-handed child as she went out, but with matronly grace, and pries like step, and with her bosom filled with well-earned gifts to pile upo its sacred hearth.

We cannot, then, be deceived in regard to the tendencies of scien and learning to elevate our theology, and to sustain and extend o religion. Our assurance of this is made doubly sure, in the purity ar excellence of those who have been most devoted to intellectual pursuit In the main they were holy men; at least, men who respected ar loved christianity. And if they could now withdraw from their abod of rest to appear in review before us, we should see them profound acknowledging the superior wisdom of Moses, and the high Divinity Jesus. There was Bacon—"the great Bacon—the great confidant nature—fraught with all the learning of the past, and almost presci of the future, far too wise not to know his weakness, and too philosoph not to feel his ignorance." There was Milton, "rising on an angel wing to heaven, and, like the bird of morn, soaring out of sight ami the music of his grateful piety." There was Newton, placed by comm consent at the head of the race, who schooled with the lessons of inspi ation that star-like spirit which had traversed immensity, and thus fitte it for that home of its nativity to which it only too soon re-ascende There was Locke, whose deep philosophy alone taught him to adore i source. There was Hale, who adorned the christian profession as much b his humble life, as the law with his amazing learning. There was Davy one of the greatest masters of chemistry, and Cuvier, one of the most di

*The first efforts in geological science, including the labors of Burnet, Wood ward, Whiston, and Hooke, were intended to reconcile natural appearance with the biblical account of the creation and the deluge.

guished among naturalists, and hosts whom time fails me to name, who lingly contributed all the results of their vast investigations in con- nation of the Scriptures. To these men we look as our philosophic des. They are among the brightest stars that shine in the firmament fame. But, like stars, they all veil their faces before the sun of elation. Everywhere the mightiest intellect is now bowing to the hority of our sacred records. Though tried in many a fierce and ubtful struggle, christianity is coming out triumphant at last; and the y weapons by which she was assailed have gotten her the victory. ke the olive of Sophocles, she still remains, lovely, adorable, and injured by all the efforts of ancient or modern times to uproot her.* There can, then, be no enterprise more becoming the dignity of man, more accordant with his high interests, than the diligent pursuit of sdom. The study, self-denial, and confinement which it demands, e not to be compared with the pleasures, honors, and advantages which secures. Aye, the student's difficulties and discouragements, what- er they may be, dwindle down into insignificance by the side of the ories that shall reward his efforts. And for him to spurn the crown intelligence because of the labor necessary for its acquirement, is as olish as for the husbandman to sit down amid the joys of harvest to ep over the toil and expense of seed time—as for the traveller on the lps to mourn over the fatigue through which he came up to witness the pturous scenery which spreads in grandeur around him—or, for the int in Paradise to look down with grudge upon the cost of his salva- on. Away, away with that spiritless fear which makes resolution wer before little steeps of difficulty. Away with that brutishness that content in ignorance.

Quod si
Frigida curarum fomenta relinquere posses,
Quo te coelestis Sapientia decceret, ires.
Hoc opus, hoc studium parvi properemus et ampli,
Si patriae volumus, si nobis vivere cari.

But, gentlemen, there is a *moral responsibility* involved in this matter, hich you must not overlook. There can be no question as to the bject of human life. Our nature and our circumstances, our consciences nd our God, proclaim that *we are*, in order *to do good*. And our duty is roportioned to our ability. But to exercise ourselves usefully in life to ie full measure of our ability, knowledge is indispensable. And this roposition holds good with regard to all spheres of human effort. Some you are looking forward to the sublime office of the christian ministry s the path in which you can best fulfil the purpose of your being. But our success and usefulness there, next to pure piety, depend most on our information and mental culture. Some of you have been sending ut your thoughts toward the bar and legislative halls as affording a heatre for virtuous deeds to which your talents and inclinations are best dapted. But you can make no calculations upon distinction which shall ver be realized in that department unless you found them on intelligence. ome of you may be thinking of more retired walks; but in all the orld, there is not an honorable path of life, where a prosperous termi-

*Phuteum' acheirooton autopoion,
Encheoon phobema daioon;
To men ti oute neos oute gerai
Semainoon haliooesi cheri persas.—*Oed. col.* 696.

nation does not rest next to the fear of God, on your attainments
intellectual cultivation. The pursuit of wisdom is hence, not only
agreeable recreation, but an imperious duty. The objects for which
were created shall only be imperfectly accomplished without attentio
it. It urges itself upon every one by considerations which reach
into Heaven, and forward through eternity. He who made us,
laws he has given us, the awards of the judgment that awaits us,
best feelings that glow within us, the highest hopes which Time's tri
lations allow to us, all combine to shut us into the necessity of utm
diligence in the acquisition of knowledge.

And how superior are the advantages now enjoyed for the prosecut
of intellectual pursuits! There was a time when the foundations
human learning were not yet laid—when its materials were not
collected—when schools and learned men were few—when a few doz
of ragged parchments were the only books—and when students w
happy when they could find bleached bones on which to record
wisdom of their instructors! A child at twelve years is now frequen
advanced in the path of letters beyond a man at thirty when the wo
was younger. We have now neither to begin where our fathers c
nor to contend with the same embarrassments. We have the advantag
all their sage counsels and discoveries. The labors, eloquence, pa
otism, travels; and thoughts of all the past contribute to our super
helps. We begin where the greatest and wisest of other days left
The profoundest reflections of great minds on all the great subjects
human interest, are among the first lessons of our childhood. T
press, the compass, the telescope, and all the great instruments of scie
and learning, have been prepared to our hands. Every State has
colleges; and almost every county has its classical schools and learn
instructors. We live in an age which embodies the fruits of all p
inventions, discoveries, sacrifices, and studies. The thoughts of ev
philosopher, the observations of every traveler, the sufferings of ev
defender of truth and human rights, the blood of every christian mart
all have contributed their portion to the high advantages which bl
our condition. For us Socrates, Plato, and Bacon lived. For
Archimides, Galileo, Godfrey, Newton, Kepler, Pascal, Herschel, a
Columbus labored. For us the noble Greek, the hardy Roman, and c
own great Washington fought the battles of freedom. For us Hom
sung "Achilles' wrath," and Demosthenes "fulmined over Greece," a
Burke and Chatham poured their lofty eloquence on the enchanted ea
of unwilling Parliaments. For us Henry and Adams, Hancock a
Ames, stirred up the faithful spirits of the revolution. For us Jefferso
and Marshall, and Story lived to expound the principles of our free co
stitution. A glorious birth-right is ours, and an inheritanee richer th
all the gold that ever glittered in the fabled El Dorado, or that no
gilds the paths of the gathering waters of California.

Nor are we to infer from what has been accomplished, that nothi
more remains to be done. This is the argument of weakness a
stupidity, and not the thought of genius. It was the beautiful rema
of Newton when passing from the stage of time, "I know not what
may appear to the world; but to myself, I seem to have been only like
boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself with now and th
finding a smoother pebble, or a prettier shell than ordinary, while t

t ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." Yes, gentlemen, re remaineth yet much land to be possessed." The field is not yet explored. We have learned something of a few stars and of the surement of the planetary system; but how much yet remains to be aled of the more distant worlds! Something has been done to ate the social nature of man; but how much must yet be done ere reaches perfection! A few elements have been analyzed, and a few stances defined; but who can say that chemistry has completed its k! How many great problems of mathematics and morals yet lie esolved! What depths and altitudes in Theology that have never n explored! What high themes of poetry and eloquence that have er been touched! Alexander might weep while seated upon the one of the world, for he saw that God had set limits to his conquests. t the student need never grieve for lack of opportunities of adventure ong the mysteries of truth. In every department of literary and ntific effort, there remains enough to fill the highest measure of sonable ambition.

It is true, that all cannot be equally distinguished. It is not for ry one to tower above the rest of his fellows as a Moses—a Luther a Bacon—a Newton— or a Washington. And even if this were ssible, these names bring with them the recollections of ignorance, gradation, and wretchedness which no generous heart would have enacted in the world for all their fame. Who that would have the urch enslaved and oppressed for four long centuries in order to be the ses to bring out the sufferers from their bondage? Who would have r plunged into another thousand years of corruption and night to be e Luther to deliver her? Who that would have the human race rown back into barbarism to play the part of Bacon and Newton in structing it? Ah, who that would have our glorious America again sulted and trampled, as once, by British misrule, in order to be the ader in her deliverance. I rejoice with hearty enthusiasm in the ustrious deeds of these mighty men. But when I recollect the scenes disgrace and suffering which called them into being, and gave occa- on for their pre-eminence, my prayer is that we may never see their e again. Nor are these great men exclusively entitled to the honor the glorious achievements with which their names are associated. he faith and covenant of Abraham, and the piety of his mother, gave Moses much of the dignity and fame with which he is credited. ante, Petrarch, and Boccacio struck the notes of reformation in their ngs, and Wickliffe and Huss pointed the public mind to papal abuses. ng before Luther burnt the bull of Leo. Luther was as much the *ild* as the *father* of the Reformation. It was partly the spirit of the ge bearing him on its high waves, that brought him to the view and dmiration of so many people. And what is the spirit of an age, but he aggregate of universal thought? What but the ocean to which very fountain, rill, and river has contributed its portion of waters? very man that ever gives attendance to thought contributes something o its formation, and is entitled to some of the honor of whatever great esults it may bring forth. And what, though that contribution be ilently made, and there be none to proclaim the praise of it among nen? It cannot fail of its appointed effect. And when Omniscience hall distribute the awards of justice, it will not lose the heavenly